

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 1992

NEW YORK POST  
**Sports**

**YANKS WAIVE ALVARO,  
PUT GALLEG0 AT SS**

Joel Sherman / Page 52

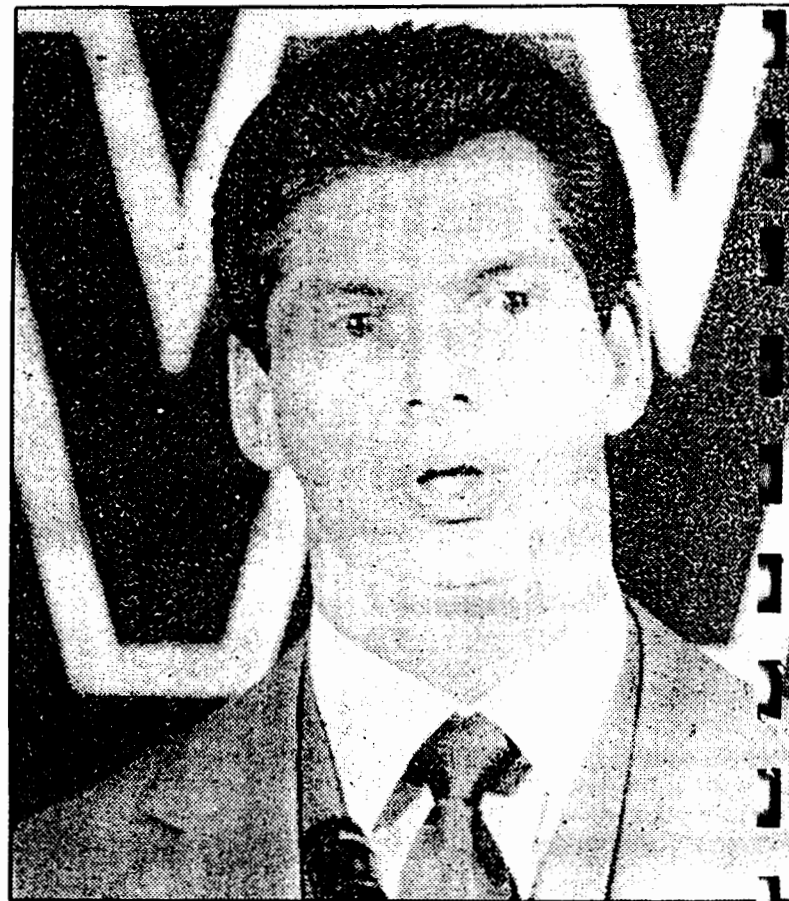
**SCOUTING FOR POLICE  
NOT TALENT, IN FLA.**

John Harper / Page 53

# SEX, LIES AND THE WWF

**EQUAL TIME**

PHIL  
MUSHNICK



**BODY-SLAMMING THE FACTS:** World Wrestling Federation owner Vince McMahon has begun spin control of recent charges of sexual harassment against WWF employees. But his comments on the "Phil Donahue Show" are being greeted with a great deal of skepticism. See Phil Mushnick's column on Page 55.

**Mushnick: McMahon bought way out of sex suit**

# PRINCETON EYES MORE THAN MORAL VICTORY

Dave Hanson / Page 49

# La SALLE's WOODS: THE TALK OF PHILLY

Frank Isola / Page 4

IN A WORLD where scandal within legitimate ranks has become an every-day reality, there are many who respond to the staggering tales being reported by men who once served the World Wrestling Federation as tales that are both easily explained and dismissed. After all, we're told, pro wrestling is simply a rogue industry behaving as a rogue industry.

And that's exactly the mindset WWF owner Vince McMahon is banking on. And that's exactly what has empowered his WWF to do to people — children and adults — exactly as it wishes, when it wishes, and as often as it wishes. The WWF is power drunk in the knowledge that its autonomy fully enables it to violate every standard of human decency because right-headed humans possess neither the time nor inclination to do anything about an industry they've always viewed with bemused disregard.

Never will you encounter a human more more cold-blooded, more devoid of honor and propriety than Vince McMahon.

## EQUAL TIME

PHIL  
MUSHNICK



America's foremost TV babysitter. In your wildest, most twisted dreams, you won't meet up with the likes of McMahon, a miscreant so practiced in the art of deception, the half-truth and the bald-faced lie as to make the Artful Dodger appear clumsy.

# WWF'S DEFENSE JUST MORE LIES



settlement with Cole in an attempt to prevent him from filing a lawsuit. He said he's trying to reach a settlement solely in an attempt to "get to the bottom" of the charges.

Monday, McMahon appeared on the Donahue show with an altered story. He said the possibility existed that these ugly charges were true, but then, as the story wore on, he fought the charges with the same practiced indignation and heart-clutching outrage seen Friday night.

What wasn't immediately apparent Monday was that Donahue's studio audience included Tom Cole, the kid who McMahon said on CNN Friday he was trying to meet with, but only to hear his charges and not to sign a financial settlement. Cole arrived at the show in the company of WWF employees. Incredible as it may seem, Cole had reached an "agreement" with McMahon before Monday's Donahue show.

The conditions of the McMahon agreement are that Cole will never again be confronted by Phillips, Garber, or Patterson; that McMahon will provide Cole with a multi-year contract to return to his position as a ringboy (a gofer with a long-term contract!); and that Cole will receive two years back pay, plus what's two years back pay for a teen-age ringboy who used to make \$100 a show, working more than 30 shows per week. Seventy thousand dollars!

Cole's attorney, Alan Fuchsberg, said yesterday that the deal is a payoff, but rather an agreement because Cole has returned to the job he once loved. Not a payoff, but an agreement? Semantic obfuscation. For \$70,000, plus adding a

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America's foremost TV babysitter. In your wildest, most twisted dreams, you won't meet up with the likes of McMahon, a miscreant so practiced in the art of deception, the half-truth and the bald-faced lie as to make the Artful Dodger appear clumsy.

A George Steinbrenner or a Don King pale by comparison. So help us. Indeed, Hannibal Lecter is the only fictional character who comes close.

After nine months of examining this man's ways and means, let's pick it up Friday night, with McMahon's spin-control appearance on Larry King's CNN show.

Following the conviction in June of Dr. George Zahorian for illegally dispensing steroids and other drugs to WWF stars (including Hulk Hogan), ex-wrestlers, ex-ring announcers and ex-ringboys have been crawling out of the woodwork to report — on the record — years of blatant sexual abuse, sexual harassment, pedophilia and drug abuse engaged in and perpetrated by WWF executives, stars and administrators.

So, on Friday night, McMahon appeared on CNN, in full knowledge of this steady stream of charges, and fully expecting a lawsuit from a 21-year-old named Tom Cole, whose corroborated claim is that he was sexually molested and harassed by WWF execs and front-office workers while serving the WWF as an under-aged ring assistant/gofer.

McMahon met the accusations with 30 minutes worth of indignation and unblinking lies. Mel Phillips? The WWF TV ring announcer and road boss named by Cole and another youngster as the man who had recruited them, then sexually abused



**SPIN CONTROL:** World Wrestling Federation owner Vince McMahon has gone on national TV to counter allegations of sexual harassment against WWF employees — but, according to *The Post's* Phil Mushnick, his defense was less than truthful.

them? "Mel Phillips has never been an employee of the WWF," McMahon told King with a strident resolve. "To this day — never been an employee. He is used as an occasional laborer."

Yeah, on the occasions when the WWF is in business. Phillips is well known to the wrestling world as a WWF regular for 10 years or more. Monday, on the Phil Donahue Show, seated among seven of the WWF's accusers, McMahon ammended Phillips' history. Phillips, said McMahon, "is not technically an employee, although he worked with us every day." Oh!

McMahon also told King's national audience that he had "no idea, whatsoever" about any sexual misconduct by employees; not even a hint. Yet, two weeks ago, during pour-his-heart-out phone calls, he told West Coast-based journalist Dave Meltzer, then me, that he had let Phillips go four years ago because Phillips' relationship with kids seemed peculiar and unnatural. McMahon said he re-hired Phil-

lips with the caveat that Phillips steer clear from kids.

McMahon also said that no charges of sexual harassment had ever before been leveled. Baloney! As far back as 1976, Jim Wilson, a former NFL lineman, accused a National Wrestling Alliance exec of blackballing him from the business after refusing the exec's sexual advances. The WWF was a member of the NWA at the time, and Wilson's story and fate is well-known within the wrestling industry. In 1985, Wilson repeated his charge on ABC's "20/20."

McMahon, dripping with sincerity, told King he had begun an internal investigation of all the charges. But later, he said that all the charges were "a bunch of bunk." That's some way to begin an investigation.

McMahon also said that while he accepted the resignations of his right-hand man, Pat Patterson, and Patterson's assistant, Terry Garvin — ex-wrestlers and WWF execs publicly charged by at least 10 people as having made

sexual advances on wrestlers and as having engaged in casting-couch employment practices — McMahon had the colossal gall to suggest that these execs were victims of America's creeping homophobia.

Good God! Is there anyone with a more complete track record of teaching kids to hate homosexuals than McMahon? All his employees who have accepted ring roles as effeminate wrestlers have been positioned by McMahon as the villains.

Hate has always been a big kiddiesell of McMahon's, and hatred for homosexuals has been a steady angle pitched to children. In recent tag-team matches, The Bushwhackers have wrestled the effeminate Beverly Bros. Each time, The Bushwhackers encourage the kids in the audience to chant "faggots" at the Beverlys. This scene, mom and dad, has appeared on the WWF's nationally televised shows.

Finally, Friday, McMahon flatly denied that he was attempting to reach a financial

fronted by Phillips, Garvin, Patterson; that McMahon vide Cole's a multi-year contract to return to his position as a ringboy (a gofer with a term contract!); and that McMahon receive two years back pay for what's two years back pay for a teen-age ringboy who used to make \$100 a show, working more than 30 shows per week. Seventy thousand dollars!

Cole's attorney, Alan Fuchsberg said yesterday that the deal is a payoff, but rather an agreement because Cole has returned to a job he once loved. Not a payoff, but an agreement? Semantic obfuscation. For \$70,000, plus adding a paid ringboy to the payroll, McMahon gets away cheap. It means the preservation of a multi-billion dollar TV and movie empire. Certainly, McMahon put himself out of what promised to be a devastating lawsuit.

(The WWF still faces a fair-termination suit filed by former announcer Murray Close, who claims he was fired after rejecting a WWF executive's sexual advances).

Fuchsberg said that McMahon is in an effort to save the WWF. He will make a full and sincere admission that the sexual misconduct claims made by Cole are true. Oh, really? Fuchsberg said he saw only the final minutes of the Donahue Show. He didn't know McMahon, his agreement with Cole already done, had a chance to come clean about Cole's claims, but instead used the Donahue show to continue to try to discredit all the people who had come forward to support Cole's story!

That's how Vince McMahon spent Day 1 as the new, improved, sincere Vince McMahon. Donahue staffers and the panelists, including Bruno Sammartino, Meltzer and Hodgson — who had come forward to expose the WWF on the Donahue show — were appalled to learn that one of the people they had to bat for (Cole) had not been bought off by McMahon, but that the WWF brought him to t

# Vince spinning out of control

MUSHNICK From Page 55

show to flaunt him before the whistleblowers' disbelieving eyes. Vintage McMahon.

But most disturbing about Monday's Donahue show was the look on many of the faces of the adults in the audience. They looked amused by it all; as if they were watching a cartoon show and listening to the testimony of make-believe men. A story of midget wrestlers being blackballed from the WWF because one of their own, the Karate Kid, refused the sexual advances of a WWF exec, led to chuckles from the audience.

But if this story had been about the Orioles, or the Packers, or General Electric, no one would be laughing. It would not only be the lead story among every news entity in this land, a Congressional hearing, following a drop-everything FBI investigation, would ensue.

While the WWF's accusers continue to surface on a virtual daily basis, this story must no longer be left to the media to expose. State and federal legislatures must see it through. Federal law-enforcement agencies must act. If the FBI can go after Howard Spira, it can go after the WWF.

But as long as the WWF's real-life horrors are considered a laughing matter, no one's laughing louder than Vince McMahon.